

NEC Spherically

NEC

NEC is among only a handful of companies that offer telecommunications and UC products worldwide. The company is shifting its focus from its strong-performing appliances to its forward-looking Spherically platform complemented by a broad portfolio of UC, wireless, voice, data and managed services, as well as systems integration and application development.

NEC is a large multinational company with a deep internal bench of skills, capabilities and patents. Strong financial resources enable the company to self-finance creative leasing solutions. The company manufactures many of its own components and has an impressive history of high-technology innovation.

NEC Spherically

Spherically is not a PBX in the traditional sense of the term. Rather, Spherically is a platform for unified communication services which happens to include traditional PBX functionality. Being a PBX is more of a feature than identity. Spherically treats communications as an application or service—directly to end users and/or via Web services to other business applications that need not concern themselves with communication infrastructure.

Spherically is designed to take advantage of the ongoing assimilation of telecom into IT. NEC is betting the trend will continue to a point where telecom is viewed as an IT service that is potentially blended with other IT initiatives and systems. Spherically is how NEC intends to capitalize on the next wave of convergence.

The TalkingPointz UC Web analysis concludes Spherically Release 8 can be seen as a broad and mature telephony solution with robust voice features, a broad range of clients and endpoints, and a broad contact center.

Excerpts from Full Report



“NEC has an ace up its sleeve—it produces and sells its own servers (and storage). This gives NEC the capability to deliver the best of a software-based solution on its own servers; an appliance-like solution.”

“Organizations adopting SOA, standards and thin clients will find Spherically particularly attractive. Its simplistic pricing and highly available architecture, however, will also appeal to users focused on core voice and contact center solutions.”

“Spherically is as much an IT solution as a UC solution. Spherically enables a thin client architecture through the use of RIA clients, its SOA approach will facilitate extensibility, and its HA and virtualization approach will integrate with existing or broad IT procedures. NEC is truly addressing voice as an IT service in its architecture.”



NEC has a slight benefit in terms of its commitment to a Rich Internet Applications (RIA) framework. NEC should be able to roll out new clients using its RIA architecture relatively quicker than many of its competitors. The technology today relies heavily on Adobe Air, which allows a single solution to work on multiple desktops and portables. For this reason, NEC has reasonable confidence that its existing clients will work on the next few generations of tablets. NEC's clients are effectively platform independent with this approach. Additionally, this technology is fairly well optimized for HTML5, which is also rapidly gaining support and acceptance.

The following strengths and weaknesses are based on the NEC Sphericall 8.0. a significant upgrade featuring major changes to the contact center and Instant Messaging systems, upgrades to administration, load balancing, new IOS clients, and many other features.

Strengths

- Sphericall takes an innovative approach to resiliency – it's built in and at no additional cost. The licensing model focuses on users rather than servers, additional servers (physical or virtual) automatically load balance and provide fail over services.
- NEC Sphericall received a coveted PBX1 JITC certification. The Joint Interoperability Test Command (JITC) conducts testing of national security systems and information technology systems hardware, software and components. Few systems have obtained this certification, which is required by most defense agencies and valued by many more. NEC claims the JITC designation effectively kills customer security concerns and has proven to be valuable in multiple verticals unrelated to defense.
- Sphericall tightly integrates with Microsoft Exchange. Combining Sphericall with Exchange provides a unified messaging solution with a single database (as opposed to two message stores).
- MCD has the unique benefit of software based solution that can be delivered as an appliance in locations where that's more suitable.

Weaknesses

- Largely as a result of measured and intentional planning, NEC's Sphericall-capable channel remains relatively small.
- Historically, NEC has provided strong migration paths between product generations. This was the case with its NEAX to SV8000. However, as of this time there is no solution to migrate SV8000 licensing (core or applications) or NEC digital phones to Sphericall.
- Although NEC offers Sphericall mobile clients for Apple IOS and in Flash supported on multiple devices, native clients for Android and RIM are currently unavailable.